FAITHFULNESS IN MINISTRY: A STUDY OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN THE EVANGELICAL TABERNACLE CHURCH (KINGMI) IN PAPUA LAND, SORONG CLASSIS

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Abstract
Faithfulness in ministry is a crucial aspect of pastoral leadership, particularly within local churches facing complex social and cultural challenges. The Evangelical Tabernacle Church (KINGMI) in Papua Land, Sorong Classis, presents a unique ministry context that requires faithful and integrative pastoral leadership. This study aims to examine pastoral faithfulness from theological and practical perspectives and its implementation within the KINGMI Sorong Classis context. This research employs a qualitative method using a case study approach. Data were collected through literature review, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that pastoral faithfulness is demonstrated through commitment to God's calling, faithful biblical teaching, consistent pastoral care, and leadership with integrity. Such faithfulness positively impacts spiritual growth, church unity, and ministry sustainability.

Keywords: faithfulness; pastoral leadership; church ministry; KINGMI Church

Introduction

Faithfulness in pastoral ministry is a central concern in Christian leadership discourse, particularly in the context of church sustainability and spiritual formation. Globally, churches are increasingly confronted with challenges such as secularization, leadership burnout, and shifting cultural values, which place significant pressure on pastoral leaders to remain committed to their calling. In this context, faithfulness is no longer understood merely as longevity in service but as consistent obedience to God's

calling expressed through integrity, sacrificial service, and responsible spiritual leadership (Stott 2007).

Within the Indonesian context, pastoral ministry faces additional complexities related to social diversity, economic inequality, and rapid cultural change. Many local churches struggle with leadership instability, pragmatic ministry approaches, and diminished emphasis on pastoral formation. These challenges have raised critical questions about the role of pastoral faithfulness in sustaining healthy congregations and nurturing Christian education within the church. Consequently, faithfulness in pastoral leadership becomes a strategic theological and educational issue rather than a purely moral one (Sanders 2007).

This issue is particularly evident in the context of the Evangelical Tabernacle Church (Gereja Kemah Injil KINGMI) in Papua, especially within the Sorong Classis. The geographical conditions, socio-cultural diversity, and economic limitations of Papua create a unique ministry environment that demands resilient and faithful pastoral leadership. Pastors in the KINGMI Sorong Classis are not only responsible for preaching and administration but also function as primary educators of faith, shaping the spiritual character of congregations through teaching, mentoring, and personal example.

Despite the growing body of literature on pastoral leadership and church ministry, existing studies tend to focus on leadership models, organizational effectiveness, or spiritual leadership in urban and Western contexts. There remains a notable lack of empirical and contextual theological research that examines pastoral faithfulness within Eastern Indonesian churches, particularly in Papua. Moreover, limited attention has been given to how pastoral faithfulness functions as a formative element of Christian education

within local congregations. This gap highlights the need for a contextual study that integrates theological reflection with practical ministry realities in Papua.

In response to this gap, this study explores how faithfulness is understood and practiced by pastors serving in the KINGMI Sorong Classis and how such faithfulness influences congregational life and spiritual formation. The central concern of this research lies in examining the theological foundations of pastoral faithfulness, its practical implementation in ministry, and its impact on the educational and spiritual development of church members.

The purpose of this study is to analyze pastoral faithfulness from theological and practical perspectives within the specific context of the KINGMI Sorong Classis. By doing so, this research seeks to contribute theoretically to pastoral theology and Christian education by providing a contextualized understanding of faithfulness in ministry. Practically, the findings are expected to offer insights and recommendations for pastors, church leaders, and theological educators in strengthening faithful pastoral leadership and faith formation within local churches, particularly in culturally diverse and mission-oriented contexts such as Papua.

In Christian theology, faithfulness is understood as steadfast obedience and loyalty to God’s calling, grounded in covenantal commitment and sustained by divine grace. Scripture emphasizes that faithfulness is a fundamental requirement for those entrusted with ministry responsibilities, as stated in 1 Corinthians 4:2: “Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” This theological perspective frames faithfulness not merely as personal morality but as accountable stewardship before God. Faithfulness encompasses perseverance, integrity, and consistency

in fulfilling God’s mission, regardless of circumstances. Theologically, faithfulness reflects God’s own character and becomes a response to God’s faithfulness toward humanity.[1]

From a pastoral perspective, faithfulness is closely related to vocation. A pastor’s calling is not self-generated but divinely initiated, and faithfulness involves sustained commitment to that calling over time. Stott argues that pastoral faithfulness requires obedience to Scripture, humility in service, and endurance amid suffering.[2] Thus, faithfulness is both relational—rooted in communion with God—and practical—expressed through responsible ministry to God’s people.

Pastoral Leadership in Biblical and Theological Perspectives, Biblically, pastoral leadership is modeled through the metaphor of shepherding. The Old and New Testaments portray leaders as shepherds entrusted with the care, guidance, and protection of God’s people. Jesus Christ is presented as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11), establishing a Christological foundation for pastoral leadership. This model emphasizes sacrificial love, personal involvement, and responsibility for the spiritual well-being of the community. Faithfulness in pastoral leadership, therefore, is inseparable from imitation of Christ’s self-giving ministry.[3]

Theologically, pastoral leadership is often described as servant leadership. Sanders defines spiritual leadership as leadership that moves people onto God’s agenda rather than personal ambition.[4] This understanding positions faithfulness as the core virtue of pastoral leadership, manifesting through integrity, humility, and perseverance. Tidball further emphasizes that New Testament leadership is communal and formative, aiming not only at

organizational effectiveness but at spiritual maturity and faith formation within the church.[5] In this sense, pastoral leadership carries an educational dimension, where pastors function as teachers and mentors who shape the faith and character of believers.

Previous Studies on Pastoral Faithfulness and Leadership, Several empirical and theological studies have explored pastoral leadership and faithfulness, though mostly within Western or urban contexts. A study by Kim (2018) highlights that pastoral faithfulness significantly contributes to congregational trust and long-term church stability, emphasizing consistency in teaching and moral integrity.[6] Similarly, Lee and Smith (2020) found that faithful pastoral leadership positively influences congregational spiritual growth and participation in ministry.[7] These studies affirm that faithfulness functions as a relational and formative factor in church life.

However, research focusing on pastoral faithfulness within Indonesian or Papuan contexts remains limited. Indonesian theological journals often address pastoral leadership in general terms, with less emphasis on faithfulness as a theological and educational construct. Moreover, few studies explicitly examine how pastoral faithfulness operates as a form of Christian education within local congregations. This gap indicates the need for contextual research that integrates theological reflection, pastoral practice, and educational impact, particularly within churches serving culturally diverse and mission-oriented regions such as Papua.

Theoretical Framework and Propositions. Based on the reviewed literature, this study employs a theological-practical

framework that views pastoral faithfulness as a foundational variable influencing church ministry and Christian education. Faithfulness is understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing (1) commitment to God's calling, (2) integrity in pastoral leadership, and (3) consistency in teaching and pastoral care. These dimensions are derived from biblical theology and supported by pastoral leadership theory.

The central theoretical proposition of this study is that pastoral faithfulness functions as a formative force in congregational life. Specifically, faithful pastoral leadership is expected to contribute to spiritual growth, congregational unity, and sustained participation in ministry. Within the context of the KINGMI Sorong Classis, this framework assumes that pastoral faithfulness also serves as a contextual educational practice, shaping faith formation amid cultural and social challenges. This framework guides the analysis of empirical data and provides a lens for interpreting the role of faithfulness in pastoral leadership and Christian education.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method using a case study approach. A qualitative design is appropriate because the research seeks to explore meanings, experiences, and theological understandings related to pastoral faithfulness rather than to measure variables quantitatively. The case study approach allows for an in-depth examination of pastoral leadership within its real-life ministry context John W. Creswell. 2013, 47–48.

The research was conducted in the Evangelical Tabernacle Church (Gereja Kemah Injil Indonesia KINGMI), Sorong Classis, located in Papua, Indonesia. This context was selected due to its distinctive geographical, cultural, and ecclesial characteristics,

which shape the practice of pastoral ministry. The Sorong Classis represents a mission-oriented church setting where pastors carry significant responsibilities in spiritual leadership, Christian education, and community formation.

The research subjects consisted of gembala sidang (senior pastors) and selected church leaders who are actively involved in ministry within the KINGMI Sorong Classis. These participants were chosen purposively based on their direct experience and involvement in pastoral leadership and congregational ministry, making them relevant sources for understanding the practice of faithfulness in service. Sugiyono, 2017, 218.

Data collection techniques included three primary methods: 1) literature study, focusing on biblical texts, theological works, and academic journals related to pastoral leadership and faithfulness; 2) semi-structured interviews with pastors and church leaders to gather firsthand insights into their understanding and practice of pastoral faithfulness; and 3) documentation, such as church reports and ministry records, to support and contextualize the interview data.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. The collected data were systematically coded, categorized, and interpreted to identify recurring themes related to faithfulness, pastoral leadership, and ministry practice. The analysis process involved comparing empirical findings with theological concepts and leadership theories to develop a coherent interpretation aligned with the research objectives. Johnny Saldaña 2016, 14–16.

To ensure data validity and trustworthiness, this study applied triangulation, particularly source and method triangulation. Data obtained from interviews were cross-checked with documentary

evidence and relevant literature. This process enhances the credibility and reliability of the findings by reducing subjective bias and strengthening interpretive accuracy. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln 2011), 302–304.

Results

This study explored faithfulness in ministry as practiced by pastoral leaders within the Evangelical Tabernacle Church (KINGMI) in Papua Land, Sorong Classis. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings are presented thematically as follows:

Understanding of Faithfulness in Ministry

The results indicate that pastors in the Sorong Classis understand faithfulness primarily as **obedience to God's calling**, **commitment to pastoral responsibilities**, and **consistency in service despite challenges**. Faithfulness is not viewed merely as longevity in ministry, but as steadfastness in doctrine, moral integrity, and dedication to the congregation.

Expressions of Faithful Pastoral Leadership

Faithful leadership was demonstrated through regular preaching and teaching of the Word of God, pastoral care, prayer ministry, and active involvement in the daily lives of church members. Many pastors emphasized sacrificial service, often continuing ministry despite limited financial support and difficult geographical conditions.

Challenges to Faithfulness

The study identified several challenges that affect pastoral faithfulness, including economic limitations, family pressures, cultural expectations, and lack of access to ongoing theological training. Despite these obstacles, most pastors remained

committed to their calling, relying on faith, prayer, and support from their congregations.

Impact on Congregational Life

The findings show that faithful pastoral leadership has a positive impact on congregational life. Churches led by faithful pastors experienced stronger spiritual growth, increased unity, higher participation in worship and ministry activities, and greater trust between leaders and members.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm the biblical perspective that faithfulness is a central characteristic of effective pastoral leadership (1 Corinthians 4:2). In the context of KINGMI in Sorong Classis, faithfulness is deeply connected to a strong sense of divine calling and personal devotion to God.

The understanding of faithfulness among KINGMI pastors aligns with servant leadership models, where leadership is expressed through humility, sacrifice, and commitment to serving others. This reflects Jesus' teaching on leadership as service (Mark 10:42–45), which is highly relevant in the communal culture of Papua.

The challenges identified in this study highlight the contextual realities of ministry in Papua Land. Economic hardship and limited resources could potentially discourage long-term ministry; however, the pastors' perseverance demonstrates that faithfulness is sustained not primarily by external rewards but by spiritual conviction and communal support.

Furthermore, the positive impact of faithful pastoral leadership on congregational life confirms that faithfulness contributes to spiritual maturity, church stability, and moral guidance within the community. This supports previous studies that emphasize the role

of consistent and integrity-driven leadership in fostering healthy churches.

Overall, the discussion suggests that strengthening pastoral training, providing ongoing support, and contextualizing leadership development programs are essential to sustaining faithfulness in ministry within the KINGMI Church.

Biblical and Theoretical Framework

The concept of faithfulness in ministry is deeply rooted in Scripture and forms a foundational principle for pastoral leadership. Biblically, faithfulness is understood as steadfast commitment, obedience to God, and responsible stewardship of the calling entrusted by Him.

In 1 Corinthians 4:2, the Apostle Paul states, *“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”* This passage emphasizes that faithfulness, rather than success or popularity, is the primary requirement for those entrusted with spiritual leadership. Pastors are viewed as stewards of God’s Word, the church, and the spiritual well-being of the congregation.

Furthermore, Matthew 25:21 highlights faithfulness as a measure of accountability before God, where faithful servants are commended for their diligence and responsibility. This text underscores the long-term commitment required in pastoral ministry, even when tangible rewards are minimal.

The pastoral epistles also provide a strong biblical basis for faithful leadership. In **1** Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9, Paul outlines moral integrity, sound doctrine, and good reputation as essential qualifications for church leaders. These characteristics reflect

faithfulness expressed through consistent character and ethical conduct.

Additionally, Jesus' model of leadership in Mark 10:42–45 frames faithfulness within servant leadership. Faithful ministry is not about exercising power but about sacrificial service, humility, and willingness to suffer for the sake of others. This model is particularly relevant in the context of the KINGMI Church in Papua, where pastoral leaders often serve under challenging social and economic conditions.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study draws primarily from Servant Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Stewardship Theory, all of which provide lenses for understanding faithfulness in pastoral leadership.

Servant Leadership Theory, as developed by Robert K. Greenleaf, emphasizes leadership that prioritizes serving others, moral integrity, and the growth of followers. This theory aligns closely with the biblical understanding of pastoral ministry, where leaders serve their congregations selflessly. In the KINGMI context, servant leadership explains how faithfulness is expressed through sacrifice, care, and long-term commitment to the community.

Transformational Leadership Theory focuses on leaders who inspire, motivate, and guide followers toward positive change through vision, integrity, and example. Faithful pastors in the Sorong Classis demonstrate transformational leadership by nurturing spiritual growth, strengthening faith, and encouraging unity within the church. Their consistency and moral example influence congregations beyond formal authority.

Stewardship Theory views leaders as caretakers entrusted with responsibilities on behalf of others. Applied to pastoral leadership, this theory reinforces the biblical view that pastors are stewards of God's mission, resources, and people. Faithfulness, therefore, is measured by accountability, responsibility, and alignment with God's purposes rather than personal gain.

Integration of Biblical and Theoretical Perspectives

The integration of biblical teachings and leadership theories provides a holistic framework for understanding faithfulness in ministry. While biblical texts establish faithfulness as a spiritual and moral obligation, leadership theories help explain how faithfulness is practiced in organizational and social contexts. Together, they offer a comprehensive foundation for analyzing pastoral leadership within the Evangelical Tabernacle Church (KINGMI) in Papua Land, Sorong Classis.

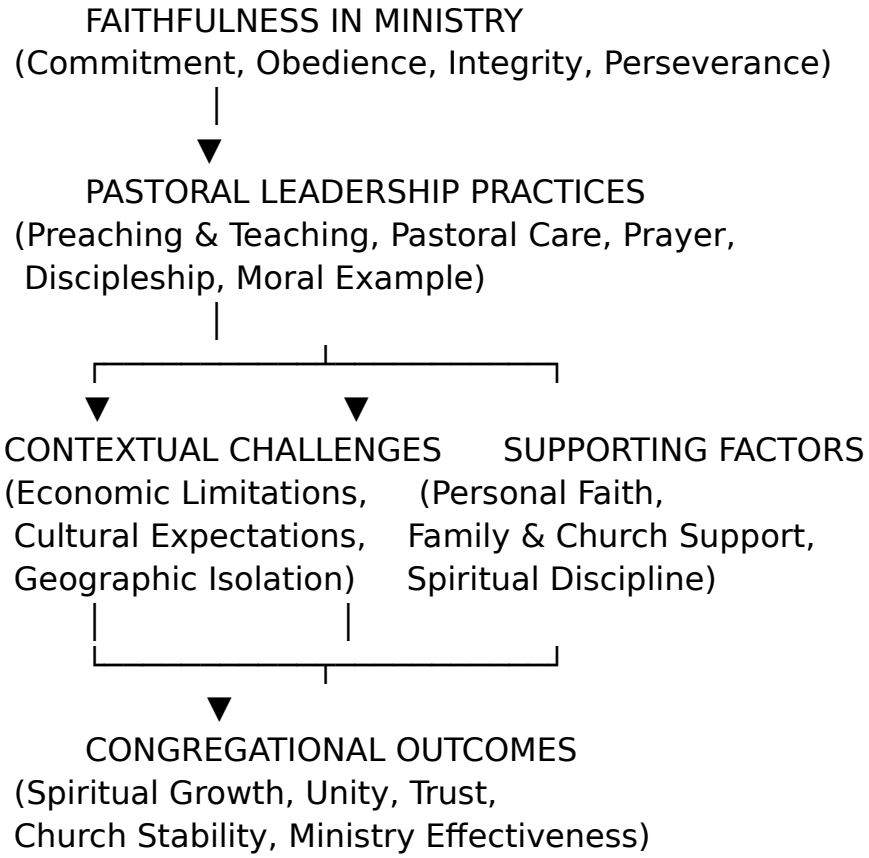
Conceptual Framework of Faithfulness in Pastoral Leadership

This conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between pastoral leadership practices, contextual challenges, and congregational outcomes faithfulness, within the Evangelical Tabernacle Church (KINGMI) in Papua Land, Sorong Classis.

Conceptual Framework Diagram (Description)

Conceptual Framework Diagram (Description)

BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
(Scripture, Calling, Stewardship, Servant Leadership)



Explanation of the Conceptual Framework

The framework begins with Biblical and Theological Foundations, which shape the understanding of pastoral calling and leadership. Scripture provides the moral and spiritual basis for faithfulness, emphasizing stewardship, obedience, and servant leadership.

At the core of the framework is Faithfulness in Ministry, defined as consistent commitment to God's calling, integrity in character, perseverance amid challenges, and obedience to biblical teaching. Faithfulness functions as the central mediating variable that influences pastoral leadership practices.

Pastoral Leadership Practices represent the practical expression of faithfulness. These include preaching and teaching the Word of God, providing pastoral care, engaging in prayer ministry, discipleship, and modeling Christian character. Faithful leadership is not only theological but also practical and relational.

The framework recognizes the influence of Contextual Challenges such as economic hardship, cultural pressures, and geographical isolation that may hinder faithful ministry. At the same time, Supporting Factors including personal spirituality, family encouragement, and congregational support strengthen pastors' ability to remain faithful.

Finally, the interaction of faithfulness, leadership practices, challenges, and support leads to Congregational Outcomes, such as spiritual maturity, unity, trust in leadership, church stability, and effective ministry. These outcomes reflect the impact of faithful pastoral leadership within the KINGMI context.

Conclusion

Based on the background of the study, the challenges and realities of pastoral ministry within the Evangelical Tabernacle Church (KINGMI) in Papua Land, Sorong Classis highlight the critical importance of faithfulness in ministry. Pastoral leaders serve in a unique context shaped by cultural diversity, geographical limitations, and economic constraints, which demand strong commitment, moral integrity, and perseverance. These contextual factors form the basis for examining how faithfulness is understood and practiced in pastoral leadership.

The formulation of the research problem emphasizes the limited scholarly attention given to faithfulness in pastoral leadership within the KINGMI Church, particularly in the Sorong

Classis. This gap necessitates a focused study to understand the meaning of faithfulness from the perspectives of pastors, the challenges they face in sustaining faithful service, and the influence of such leadership on congregational life.

In line with the research objectives, this study seeks to examine the biblical and practical understanding of faithfulness in ministry, analyze pastoral leadership practices, and identify factors that support or hinder faithful ministry. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to contribute meaningful insights to pastoral leadership development, theological reflection, and ministry sustainability within the KINGMI Church.

Overall, this research underscores that faithfulness in ministry is not only a theological ideal but also a practical necessity for effective pastoral leadership. Strengthening support systems, leadership training, and contextual ministry approaches is essential for sustaining faithful pastoral service and promoting healthy congregational growth in Papua Land.

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